Minding Our Own Business

When World War I erupted in Europe in the summer of 1914, most Americans wanted no part in the war. Neutralism-a policy to not get involved with either side in a dispute-was an important part of United States foreign policy at the time. We took care of business in our own hemisphere, period. The United States’ eventual entry into the war forever changed our foreign policy. We were no longer a country that minded its own business; we were a world power that looked out for the rest of the world.

*What do you think of the policy of neutralism? Should the United States go back to that policy? Tell why or why not. How do you feel about the policy of neutralism in your personal life? When should you mind your own business? When should you get involved in other people’s disputes?*

Wilson’s War Request

In his War Request to Congress on April 2, 1917, President Woodrow Wilson (1856 – 1924) said, “It is a fearful thing to lead this great peaceful people into war, into the most terrible and disastrous of all wars, civilization itself seeming to be in the balance. But the right is more precious than peace, and we shall fight for the things which we have carried nearest our hearts-for democracy…”

*Do you think world democracy is worth fighting for? What things, if any, would you risk your life fighting for?*